

Caught

by Lamech

Category: 10th Kingdom

Genre: Drama

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2000-06-17 09:00:00

Updated: 2000-06-17 09:00:00

Packaged: 2016-04-27 20:27:23

Rating: M

Chapters: 1

Words: 7,372

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: How did Wolf end up in jail?

Caught

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The 10th Kingdom is copyrighted by NBC. In other words, the characters aren't mine but I still can have fun with themâ€|.â€|.

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By Lamech

(Note-this story starts out two months before the Queen freed Wolf from his cell.)

Wolf crouched in the bushes that ran along the small hillside. He wasn't much for hiding but if the sheep below caught wind of him or Christopher they would bolt. And while sheep weren't the smartest creatures in the animal kingdom they were bright enough to know a threat when they saw one.

Not that Wolf saw himself as a threat. He was more of a playful rival. Well, a playful rival that wanted to eat them. Still as hungry as he was, which was ravenous, he didn't like being there. He scratched his brow, a nervous habit of his. The small man beside him snorted in disgusted.

"Cousin, quit doing that, please!" Christopher hissed under his breath. The man was half the size of Wolf, and just as lean. His long hair was the color of wheat and pulled back in a ponytail. He was dressed in a green peasant shirt and shepherd's style trouser. Fairly tame compared to Wolf's almost loud red shirt and worn out pants. His face bore a small resemblance to his cousin's. They had the same nose and shaped eyes. But unlike Wolf, who was half wolf, he was full

human. But far more mischievous.

He turned back to the flock of sheep at hand. At the far end of the flock lied a shepherdess asleep in the soft, green grass. She couldn't have been any older than ten. Beneath the hot noon sun, Christopher couldn't blame the girl for snoozing on the job.

Christopher patted Wolf on the back; "This is our lucky day! Look, no one is watching!"

Wolf let out a whine, "I don't know about this. It's not like we can't just go to a restaurant or something. We have money. Plenty of it. Huff puff, I like sheep as much as the next guyâ€¦," his eyes started to glaze over with the thoughts of food, " I mean, I really like sheep, all soft and fluffy. Really tender. Maybe with some butter. Garlic butter. Yeah, lamb chops with garlic butter. Or-Or rack of lamb. Yeahâ€¦the whole kit and caboodle. Don't even bother taking off the ears or the tail because it's going down my belly in one big gulp! Cripes, what was I saying originally?" He looked at his cousin with confused eyes.

"You were saying how you were going to be the look out while I run and grab us lunch," the young man replied as he stood up from his hiding spot.

Wolf's voice trailed off, "Yes, a look out. I can do thatâ€¦hey, wait." He yanked the man back down. Something was not right. Wolf scratched his brow, again, much to the dismay of his cousin. "I don't think we should be doing this. Call it a wolf's intuition, but something is amiss here."

He pulled his cousin closer, "If we're caught, it's my bacon. They don't like wolves here." And with that last word, his eyes became engulfed in a sea of yellow. One of the few clues that revealed his half nature. . A second later they went back to being human.

That always unnerved Christopher. But it didn't matter. He was starving and dinner was just a few yards away.

"Quit thinking that way. We're not going to get caught." He took his cousin by the shoulders, "Besides it's either this or wild rabbit. Gamy rabbit. Tough, stringy meat."

"What about a restaurant?" Wolf pondered, "There's one in that village not too far back."

"I hate restaurants. I hate being fussed and mussed over like a golden goose. I get enough of that back home."

Wolf sighed and rolled his eyes, "Oh, such a harsh life."

His cousin wasn't paying any attention to him. His eyes were set on the sheep at hand. "Besides, dear cousin, doesn't food always taste better when it's cooked by your own loving hands? Fresh lamb barbecued over an open-air fire. No other cooks to spoil the broth." He leaned down and whispered into his cousin's ear, "When was the last time you had lamb so fresh it still bled when you bit into it? Hmmm? Better than rabbit, right?"

Wolf whimpered softly. His cousin always could sway him over to his side despite what his own wolfie heart was telling him. Christopher knew that he had won. He patted Wolf on the shoulders and jumped out the bush. Wolf remained behind and looked around. No farmers. Good. No shepherds. Even better. Those crooks that they carried around hurt when they were used as weapons. Maybe this would work. Maybe he was indeed overreacting. He scratched his brow for the third time. Still this was stealing, not the most noble of acts. Wolf felt like he was living up to all the horrible stereotypes that were out there about wolves. Thieves. Liars. Killers. Those were the words everyone used to describe his kind. It didn't matter if it wasn't him who was doing the actual stealing; he was a part of it. And even though the true thief was a human, Wolf knew in his heart that it would be him that would suffer the brunt if they were caught.

The half-breed let out a sad whine. What was he doing? Did his parents raise him to be a common thief? _ No, actually they taught you to eat girls. _Wolf snorted at that thought. _True. But to be a thief? Of course not. _ He knew that if his mother were still alive even in his mature age now he would get his ears boxed by her.

Wolf scratched his brow for the fourth time.

—
That's it. Ma's right. I'm not a two-bit sheep snatcher. I'm a wolf! I have pride. I'm not going to lower myself down just because I am hungryâ€|oh, so, hungry.

—
His stomach growled in agreement.

—
Hush you. You're supposed to be on my side. That settles it. Huff Puff, when Chrissy comes back with the sheep I'm going to tell him to put them right back. I'm not above eating rabbit. I like rabbit. Sure, it's not lamb. Sure, it doesn't have the same creamy dreamy aroma. Sure, it's not as tender or succulent. Sure, it doesn't hit your tongue with a million flavors all at once with a taste so wonderful you think you have died and gone to wolfie heaven.

But-But, oh, cripes, Wolf, be strong, I can deal with it.

—
"Got them!"

Wolf nearly jumped out of his skin as he swirled around to see his cousin standing before him. He held, with much difficulty, a small lamb under each arm.

Wolf stood up from his hiding spot. He straighten his back and crossed his arms across his chest. A dead serious look grew across his face. He took a deep breath, held it and said, "Only two? I'm starving!"

"No, I've got a couple more in my pockets," sneered the young man.

"Of course, just two! That's all I can carry. Now come here and grab one. We'll go into the woods and build us a fire to cook them in. Tonight we feast!"

Wolf obeyed, taking the one sheep that bleated the most. The creature was shaking in the half-breed's arms. It knew it's future and it wasn't all too pleased about the outcome. Wolf mimicked the baas of the animal as he followed his cousin into the forest.

>

> <p> The campfire had died down to a point it was nothing more than a small pile of dull amber. A makeshift skewer rack over the pyre held what was left of the sheep. It was little more than a few stray bones. Christopher lied off to the side of the fire. His body was sprawled out and his head rested on a soft bed of leaves. He looked like a thrown out ragdoll. His belt was undone and his protruding belly was stretching his shirt. He had given up on his chances of moving any time soon. Too full to budge an inch, he let out a moan.</p>

His cousin answered back with a puppyish whimper. Wolf was feeling the same way. He too was lying like a turtle stuck on his back, going nowhere fast. His mouth was still working on stripping the flesh off a bone. It was more of a comfort thing than anything else was.

"You know what we should do when we arrive back home, Cousin?" Christopher said as he stared up in the canopy of trees that shaded the two of them.

"No, what?"

"Open a restaurant. We sure eat enough to know a thing or two about food."

Wolf smiled. He loved the idea of being surrounded by food twenty-four hours a day and being paid for it. "Huff puff, that would be nice."

Christopher edged himself on his elbows and leaned over to the half-breed. A drunken grin played about his face. He always got that look whenever he ate too much. "But I'd only open it if you were there. Because you know why?"

Wolf could only shrug.

"Because you're my favorite cousin! I love you," he laughed as he plopped right down to the ground. Which only made Wolf laugh in spite of himself. Christopher snorted, "You think I'm kidding? Crumb, well, I'm not. Out of all my cousins in my family you're the one I can really relate to and you're not even human!"

The last remark made Wolf squirm in discomfort. He stopped chewing on his bone like a dog and tossed it to the side. He didn't like to be reminded of his shortcomings. "Half human." The pain came out in his voice.

"Look, my point is, you're a goodâ€|..._person_, Wolf. I only wish the rest of the family could see that."

Wolf rolled over to his side and away from the young man. His body was starting to ball up into the fetal position but he stopped himself before it was completed. His face took on a hallow look. No emotion. No guilt. No pain. Just a vacant stare. His mind played back the memories of his mother trying desperately to hide the fact that her family loathed him and his siblings. Wolf cubs in the Riding Hood family! That was too scandalous for anyone to handle.

She tried to make it up to them by being there for them every waking moment. Always there with a fresh batch of cookies, a plate of chops or a nice rabbit stew. Food to dull the pain and fill the void. He had caught his mother several times crying while she cooked. Sobbing into the meals. Wolf could always taste her sad tears whenever he ate her food. There were very few dinners where the meal didn't taste like it had been overly salted.

-

She said it was the onions. Always the onions. But I knew better.

-

Wolf closed his eyes because he felt them welling up. He really hated to cry. It came too easily to him. But he couldn't help it. The hurt was too deep. He shuddered in shock when his cousin suddenly slapped him on the back.

"Hey, hey! Don't tell me you've fallen asleep, you troll kisser!" the young man said as he dropped his head on the half-breed's shoulder. "We've got to plan out our way for tomorrow's journey." A piece of paper danced in front of Wolf's face. "This map isn't going to read itself, you know."

"Just let me rest, please."

The voice was dull and slow like a dying breeze.

Christopher shrugged his shoulders. "Ok." He rolled over and opened the map. "But you know I can't read these things so if we get lost I'm going to nag like a dwarf's wife."

Wolf didn't look at his cousin. His eyes were still close. "We won't get lost. I trust you."

And with that the half-breed found himself being pulled into sleep. He didn't resist.

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> <p> Wolf's eyes slowly opened, as he became aware that someone was nudging him in the ribs. He scratched his brow and yawned. Was it morning yet? Had he slept through the night? His body clock refused to tell him. It only yearned for more sleep. He rolled over to his side and groaned. Never fight your body clock, it knows best. A smile played across his face as a dream of a very cute shepherdess started to frolic into his mind.

Another nudge came about. Only this time it was more forceful.

Wolf's brow knitted in disgust. "Five more minutes, Chrissy. Just five more minutes." He swiped a limp hand at the space behind him.

WHOMP!

First came the sound of something cracking. It was a cold, crisp sound like a breaking a twig under a boot. The sound echoed in Wolf's brain. Then came the pain. The harsh whip of pain started in his chest and rippled throughout the rest of his body. It grabbed every nerve in his system and choked it for attention.

He had been kicked. He had been kicked so hard that his ribs had snapped.

Wolf screamed in agony. His eyes shot opened to reveal them swimming in a sea of yellow and already tearing up. His face twisted in a beastly snarl as he tried to sit up. He looked up to find the sharp end of a sword an inch away from his face.

"GET UP YOU DISGUSTING ANIMAL!" A voice bellowed.

A man dressed up in a dark gray uniform held the sword before him. Behind him were several other men dressed in similar uniforms only they were a lighter shade of gray. They poked about the campsite as if they were curious children. And behind them stood a rather stout shepherd. He held a few scrapes of wool in his hands, cradling them like babies. His face was distraught.

It took a moment for Wolf to realize that the men around him where soldiers from the White Royal Army and that the shepherd was probably the owner of the flock where he and Christopher had stolen the sheep.

Wolf closed his eyes and winced.

They had been caught red handed. And they were going to get it.

Theyâ€|.theyâ€|.

Wolf opened his eyes and looked around. Christopher was no where to be found. Not hide or hair of him. The half-breed suddenly felt a hand around his throat. It became like a vice grip and yanked him up. The captain of the group slammed Wolf against a nearby tree. Wolf let a yelp as he could feel his ribs jab into his organs. The copper taste of blood was filling his mouth. He coughed and a small spittle of blood spilled from his lips. "Chrissy," he called out in a hoarse whisper.

No one answered to that name.

"Should have known that it would be a wolf," growled the captain as he glared directly into the half-breed's eyes. "Well, you've just made the biggest mistake in your pathetic life, monster. You ate a couple of Prince Wendell's sheep. Those were royal property!"

Wolf felt his stomach turn as the man yelled at him at the top his lungs. His own mind was too messed up to pay any attention to the

captain. All he could hear were his own thoughts running around and around in the cradle of his brain.

—

Where's Chrissy? Where's Chrissy? Where's Chrissy? Where's Chrissy?

—

He didn't want to believe that he had been abandoned. That was his own cousin! His own flesh and blood. He let out a helpless whine; the type a puppy gives when crying out for its mother. The captain hissed at him for being so pathetic.

"I can shoot you right now and it would all be legal," the soldier barked as he grabbed a handful of the half-breed's hair. He shoved Wolf's head back.

It hit the trunk of the tree with a dull thud. "But that's too good for you. You are going to suffer. I'm going to see to that." He pulled the half-breed away from the tree.

Wolf fell to the ground hard. He spat out more blood. He looked up hoping to see his cousin somewhere, anywhere before him. Standing there, ready to save him from all this. But again only the small troop of soldiers and the shepherd graced his eyes. All of them looked down at him with a mixture of horror and repulsion in their eyes.

"Chrissy," he whispered to the forest around him and passed out.

>

> <p> Wolf sat in the courtroom. That is if you could call it a courtroom. It was barely more than a 10 by 10 cell with a rickety judge's bench on one end and a few chairs on the other. There wasn't even a jury a box. There was no need for one. The captain of this prison ward was the judge, jury and more often than not, the executioner. <p>

Besides the judge, there were two armed guards and the prosecutor. Wolf didn't have anyone to defend him. Not that he thought it would help much. By the look on judge's disgusted face from the moment the half-breed walked in, Wolf knew that the man was set on throwing the book at him. He hung his head and stared at his shoes. He was so tired. Tired of everything. Last time he had felt like this was when he found out about the murder of his parents. He just wanted to curl up in a ball and fall asleep for a million years.

He could feel the tears welling up in his eyes again. He bit his bottom lip until the pain ceased his crying.

"And, Wolf, do you have anything to say for yourself?" bellowed the judge down from his bench.

Wolf shook his head. He couldn't bring himself to look the man in eyes.

"Then it gives this court much pleasure to sentence you to two

hundred years, hard labor."

Wolf let a small chuckle in spite of himself. Two hundred years. I'll be lucky to be able to survive two months. And I know I won't live that long for sure. What are they going to do after that? Imprison my bones as well?

Suddenly the sound of door opening filled the room. Wolf didn't bother looking. It was probably the bailiff getting prepared to haul him away.

It was odd then to hear the judge get up from his bench and call out "Your Lordship." This made Wolf's ears perk up.

"This case can not be settle yet, your honor," a voice said from behind Wolf's back. "You haven't heard all the information."

The half-breed sat up. I know that voice. He turned around in his seat, holding at his bandaged rib caged. "Christopher."

The man responded at his name with a steady glance in Wolf's direction.

He was indeed Christopher. Only he was not wearing his commoner clothes any more. Gone was the shirt and trousers, replaced with a crisp white formal uniform. Pins of precious metals decorated his chest. His face was clean-shaven and his hair was combed and styled. And there was a look of snootiness that Wolf had not seen in a long time. It felt as if someone had taken the Chrissy he knew and loved and replaced it with a newer and more proper model. This was Christopher's other side. A member of the Royal House of Riding Hood.

Wolf wanted to stand up and give the man a good hard slug to the stomach. To scream and howl at him for ever leaving him behind. He wanted to show the man his cracked ribs and the bruises he received from the other guards as they took him to prison. But most of all Wolf wanted to make his cousin see the heartache that he suffered. However he did not do such a thing. Instead he remained in his seat, quiet, wondering what his cousin was up to.

Christopher walked up his cousin and placed his right hand on the half-breed's shoulder. He squeezed it gently. The judge snorted in disgust at such a sight. He sat back down on his bench. "With all due respect, Lord Riding Hood, may I ask what exactly are you doing here? What is your involvement with thisâ€|thisâ€|thing?"

The young Lord took out a long scroll from his jacket uniform. He unrolled it and approached the judge. "This is the lineage of the House of Riding Hood." He flipped the paper around and presented it to the judge. "As you can see at the bottom the family tree Wolf is part of the bloodline."

The judge's brow knitted as he saw this to be true. But then smiled when he spotted something written off to the side, "Yes, but, see here, according to this foot note, he is not recognized by the House. He is a bastard."

Wolf shot up from his chair; "I have a father!" The guards grabbed him by the shoulders and sat him down. Wolf corrected himself; "I had

a father. I'm not a bastard."

> <p>

Christopher took out another but smaller scroll from his jacket. "He is right." He unrolled it and placed it on top of the larger scroll. "This is the scroll of my House. The Head House may not recognize Wolf but he is part of mine. Therefore he is, by law, a Lord. And should be treated as such."

The half-breed's eyes widen by the news. He couldn't believe it. _A Lord._ He suppressed a laugh. _A Lord Wolf in the House of Riding Hood. _ He straightened up in his chair, all proper like, and looked up at the guards. They stared back dumbfounded. With flushed faces, they took their hands from his shoulders and quickly settled them at their sides. They knew the punishment for man handling a member of a royal house. Even if that member wasn't human.

Christopher stared coldly in the eyes of the shocked judge. The man knew there was no use arguing with the noble. The House of Riding Hood had a reputation of getting things their way at any cost.

"Now," said Christopher, "have you sentenced him, yet?"

"Yes, I have. For the two sheep he poached I gave himâ€|.two hundred years, hard labor." There was uneasiness in the man's voice. Something Wolf hadn't heard before. The judge was afraid of his cousin! He probably knew that with one snap of the noble's fingers, he could be fired or worse. Wolf wondered if the other prisoners would love a new jail mate that was a former judge and prison captain to play around with.

Wolf smiled. And the more he smiled the more the judge frowned.

"Y-yes, two hundred years of h-hard labor."

Christopher slammed down a clenched fist o the bench. The judge leapt in his seat and let out a small cry of fear. Wolf snorted a giggle. It was all quite comical to see a man who only a moment ago wanted to toss him in a cell and throw away the key now squirm like a bug under glass. The half-breed was even starting to feel a little sorry for the man. The Riding Hood clan was also known for its violent temper. And this man was about to get the complete full-blown wrath of it. Still the feeling was only passing.

"Two hundred years! TWO HUNDRED YEARS!" Christopher yelled in the face of the judge. The noble's own face turned red with anger and a singular, thick vein popped out in the middle of his forehead. It throbbed with every screamed out syllable.

"H-he stole a couple of sheep, my Lord" stammered the judge as he sunk into his chair.

"So, he gets two hundred years for a little poaching?!"

"Th-they were Prince Wendell's sheep, my Lord."

Christopher leaned over onto the bench. His face was barely half a foot away from the man. "I don't care if they belonged to bloody Snow

White, herself! No one, except for a lunatic, imprisons a man for two hundred years for poaching just two sheep!"

The judge pointed a shaking finger at Wolf. "But he's a wolf." He looked back at the noble with pleading eyes. "He's outlawed here. We could have had him shot on sight. But we didn't! Sir, we are a fair and gentle—"

"FAIR AND GENTLE, INDEED!" the noble screamed at the top of his lungs.

Wolf stuck his fingers in his ears, as did the guards besides him. The judge was staring down at his bench looking very much like a scolded child.

Christopher slammed his fist down on the bench, again. "You better thank your fairy godmother that such a thing did not occur. Otherwise, I, personally, would have had you and your men lined up and shot by my firing squad." There was a coldness in his voice that told everyone he meant what he said. "Now, sentence him, again."

The judge picked up his gavel. It shook like a rattle in his hand. "Wolf, I here—"

"Lord Wolf, to you," hissed Christopher.

The judge nodded. "Lord Wolf, I here by sentence you toâ€|uhmâ€|a hundred years, hard labor."

"TRY AGAIN!" the noble yelled as he glared at the man.

The judge again, nodded. He paused. He looked like he was about to cry.

Wolf was starting to really feel sorry for him.

"Lord Wolf," his voice was barely more than a shaky whisper, "I-I-I-â€|"

Christopher slammed his fist down on the bench, again. This time the sound of cracking wood answered back. "GET ON WITH IT!"

"I-I here by sentence you to..uhm, a decade?"

Christopher shook his head.

"Five years?"

The noble kept on shaking his head.

"A year?"

Again, the noble shook his head.

The judge couldn't take it anymore. He stood up from his bench, "Sir, your Lordship, he did do a crime, after all! I think going down to a year from two hundred is highly justifiable. We can't just let him go. That would make a mockery of the judicial system. And if no one can hold up the system then chaos would ensue! Chaos! Complete an utter chaos! The whole kingdom would crumble at the feet of the likes

of murderers and thieves! I plea with you. No, no, I beg of you! Sir, please, think this out."

Wolf wasn't sure of what was going on. However with a statement like that, though he didn't understand one word of it, he felt like telling the judge he'd do anything he wanted. But then again, he wasn't Christopher. The noble stood there. He had his arms crossed across his chest. His face was frozen as if it was carved out of stone. And it wasn't a pleased look that was chiseled on his face.

"Must I get Prince Wendell involved with this? He does owe my House a favor."

The judge shook in his pale skin. Wolf could smell his fear. The stench of it hung in the air like a heavy curtain. He clutched at his gavel. His eyes were cast down. "Six months and that's my final offer." He closed his eyes and slammed down the gavel.

Wolf had to hand it to the man. He had guts. It seemed that Christopher was impressed too for he agreed. The judge nearly passed out to see a smile appear on the noble's face. Wolf sighed. Six months. It was a long time. But not as long as two hundred years. He could handle six months.

He suddenly felt a hand on his shoulder. He glanced up to see his cousin smiling down at him. Then all at once a rash of painful emotions flooded Wolf's being. He remembered that it was Christopher who got him in this mess in the first place. And then left him behind. He looked away from his cousin's eyes.

"Leave me alone with my cousin for a moment," Christopher commanded.

"But, sir," one the guards said, "he's a dangerous beastâ€|"

Christopher glared at the man. "He's my cousin. Now, go. I'll call for you when I need you."

The room became empty except for the two cousins. Christopher waited until a count of five to fall against one of the cell walls in total exhaustion.

"Oh, thank goodness that's over."

Wolf didn't move from his seat. His eyes were staring at his shoes.

Christopher laughed as he loosened his jacket. He messed up his hair. He didn't like how every hair was perfectly in place. "I don't know how sis does it, Wolfie. This justice system takes a lot out of you."

The noble was answered back with silence.

"Wolf," the noble drew close to his cousin, "What's the matter? We've won!"

"You abandoned me."

The coldness in the voice struck the noble's spine like a knife. He shook it off, "Don't be that way." He suddenly scratched his brow, mimicking Wolf's nervous habit. Pausing, realizing what he had just done, he shoved his hands behind his back. "I awoke before you and went into town to get us some breakfast. You know, bacon, like you love? And when I came back I caught the captain holding you against a tree." He leaned over to the half-breed, trying to look into his eyes. But it was no use. No matter where Christopher turned to, Wolf moved in the other direction.

The noble let out a gruff sigh as he slapped his hands together. "I couldn't do anything then. They weren't going to recognize me as a noble. I was a mess. And even if they did know who I was that would have proved just as awful. Couldn't you imagine the scandal afterwards? "Lord Riding Hood, lamb thief!" At least for you it's not as bad."

Wolf's lifted his head, "Why? Is it because I'm a wolf? Because this is what is expected of me." He arose from his chair with such a force that it was knocked clear across the room. Christopher glanced over to the piece of furniture. He let out a shudder. Wolf came close to his cousin. "Is that it, _your Lordship_?"

"Wolfâ€|"

Wolf closed his eyes, "Yes, _wolf._ And you better not forget that."

Christopher swallowed the hard lump that he felt growing in his throat. His eyes became gentle. "Cousin, what is this all about? Is it because you'll be in jail for six months? Oh, come on, you know you can do that time standing on your head!" He stood face to face with half-breed; his own stance took on a submissive posture. "You'll sneeze and it'll be over."

"You don't get it, do you?"

Wolf cocked his head to one side as his eyes trailed up to his cousin's. He took in a breath and winced. His ribs still hurt. Christopher bit his lip; "I saw what they did to you." He reached out for Wolf's side, "I can see it still hurts."

Wolf jumped back away from the man's touch. His face went sour. "Don't."

Christopher took a step back and clutched his hands to his sides. "Cousinâ€|" His face was a mix of pain, confusion and pity. He didn't like to be shoved away, especially from someone he cared about. His eyes scanned his shoes. "I didn't mean for this to happen. Honestly. It just did." There was a strange whine to his voice that Wolf hadn't heard since the both of them were children. "And-and if I could take it back."

"You still would have been a coward."

Christopher froze in his stance. He wanted to object. To yell at his cousin for ever saying such a horrible lie. But it wasn't a lie. He knew that in his heart if he had another chance things would have played out the same. He felt tears coming on.

Wolf couldn't bear looking at his cousin anymore. Not because of what the noble had done, but what he, Wolf, was doing to him now. He could see the pain his cousin was going through. The gnawing effect at his heart and soul was driving him insane. Christopher could never handle guilt all that well. Wolf knew it.

"Just go."

Christopher shook his head. His voice was failing him. He coughed. It was such a pathetic sound that Wolf winced. The noble was falling apart. He grabbed his cousin by the arms and buried his head in the half-breed's chest. "No. No, I won't go. I can't! Not until you say you forgive me. Not until I hear those words from your mouth."

Wolf looked down at his cousin. "Go."

The noble released himself from the half-breed. He looked Wolf in the eye. Tears were beginning to stream down his face. The half-breed had almost forgotten how much the man looked like a helpless child when he cried. Still Wolf had carry on.

"Go, now." Wolf's voice held no emotion. "After all, cousin, I am a wolf. I may not be able to hold my primal instincts in." He moved foreword, making his cousin step back until he was pinned against the wall. "I might loose my temper and do something horrible. I am, as they say, a monster. I might tear you limb from limb. My fangs sinking in your flesh. I could eat you up." He held his arms up and against either side of the wall. He had the man trapped with no room to escape. "And I would not feel a thing."

There was pause between them. Wolf 's breath was heavy and staggered. Christopher's eyes studied his.

"Liar."

That was not the response Wolf was expecting. He bared his teeth and began to growl. Christopher laughed. Again, this was not reaction Wolf wanted. He came even closer to the man's face. His snarls became more guttural and louder.

"Oh, stop it." The noble pushed his cousin away from him.

Wolf ceased growling. He was confused.

Christopher smiled. "You used to do the same thing when we were kids. Remember? When we would fight, you'd always try to scare me with that "I'm the big bad wolf" bit. Never worked. I could always see right through you. And you know why?"

Wolf shook his head. It was the only thing he could do in his dumbfounded state.

The noble came in close to his cousin. There was a moment of silence between them, as if Christopher was about to reveal a deep and powerful secret. "Because, cousin, when it comes to your friends and family, _the ones you love,_ you couldn't hurt a fly." He finished off the sentence with another laugh. "But you almost had me fooled there for a moment. Good one, Wolfie."

Wolf could feel himself blush. The warmth was spreading throughout his body. He didn't like it. "Get out."

"Oh, come on, now."

"Leave me!" Wolf pointed at the door.

Christopher crossed his arms. He was very please with where he was, thank you. "No." He cocked his head. "You can't make me."

Wolf laughed. The whole thing was absurd. The two of them were children again. Two can play at this game. "Oh, I can't now, can I?" He smiled. His eyes took on a yellowish glow. He grabbed his cousin by the shirt collar. Not hard enough to do any damage but rough enough to give the impression he was doing so.

Christopher understood everything. "No, don't."

Wolf began yelling as loud as he could. "AND I AM GOING TO KILL YOU! I AM GOING TO RIP THE ARMS OFF ALL OF YOUR CHILDREN AND FEED THEM TO YOU! YOU WILL HAVE NIGHTMARES OF ME THAT WILL HAUNT YOU IN BROAD DAYLIGHT! I WILL MAKE YOU SEE WHY I AM CALLED A MONSTER!!!"

Christopher shook his head. "Don't do this, cousin."

"YES, BE AFRAID OF ME! I WILL MAKE A COAT OUT OF YOUR SKIN!"

Christopher closed his eyes and pleaded, "Don't push me away!"

"I AM A DEMON! I AM THE FUEL OF NIGHTMARES!"

Suddenly the door swung opened and in trampled a band of guards. Wolf looked at them and smiled. "AND I WILL KILL YOU TOO!" His face was twisted in a toothy snarl that unnerved the soldiers.

Before he realized it, Wolf found himself on the floor, tackled by three burly men. Christopher pulled at one of them. "No, don't. He doesn't mean it. It's a trick. Stop, I command it!"

But no one was listening. The men picked the half-breed from the floor. Christopher gasped to see blood smeared across his cousin's face. They had smashed his nose. Such brutality. The noble grabbed at his cousin's shirt, trying to pull him away from the guards. But Wolf shrugged him off.

Christopher watched as the men dragged his cousin off to his cell. He stood alone in room, alone with himself.

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The moments crawled on. Christopher visited every day for the next two weeks, sneaking in things like meat and books even though such items were strictly forbidden. Wolf told him to take them back. He would not accept them. He wouldn't accept anything that his cousin had brought him. It came to a point that Wolf even refused to go to the visitor's room to see the noble.

It wasn't that Wolf hated Christopher. On the contrary, the half-breed forgave his cousin the moment the man broke down in front of him in the courtroom. Christopher was right. Wolf could never hurt the ones he loved. Let alone hold a never-ending grudge against them. It was just everytime he looked into his cousin's eyes; he saw all of his own faults. His mistakes. His errors. And it brought him such pain that he could no longer stand it.

So, Christopher would stand outside of Wolf's jail cell, sticking his head between the bars, calling out for his cousin to at least look at him. But Wolf did not. He sat on his cot, his back to the door. He would stare at the wall and allow his tears to fall down his cheeks.

Then on the last day, Christopher told the half-breed that he would see him when he got out. He was wanted on a mission for Prince Wendell's coronation and could not make any more visits. Wolf answered him with silence. He wished he could have told his cousin all the things that were in his heart. But he didn't.

He just sat there with his back to the door as he listened to the sound of Christopher's footsteps trailing off down the corridor.

After that time went on. No one talked to him, though he heard whispers behind his back. They loathed him, the other prisoners. It seemed even in jail, in the midst of _thieves, murderers and liars,_ his kind was the most despised of all. He could only laugh.

When his cycle came on, the prisoners around his cell were moved to another wing. Everyone was terrified of the "man-beast". The guards failed to feed him during those days, too afraid that he would break free and kill them. When he went back to being "normal" the prisoners were moved back but no one would sit next to him the dining hall. There was a singular table that he had all to himself. The wardens dubbed it, "freak's private hell".

And that was what it exactly it was.

It was a miserable existence.

Wolf was beginning to doubt that he could do the six months. It was barely even two months and he could feel himself slipping away.

Wolf awoke to the sounds of chattering prisoners. Something was not right. Sure the jail was always noisy but never this noisy so early in the morning.

He arose from his cot and scattered to the door. A new scent hit his nose. This was different. This was something he had not smelled in a long time.

It made his senses tingle with excitement.

—
A female.

A human woman.

—

He could feel the blood rush to every pore in his body as he pressed his face through the bars. He wanted to see her. Who ever she was.

Suddenly a cloaked figured stopped in front of his cell and turned towards him. She was beautiful, even if she was a bit more in age than he was. Her skin was like peaches and her hair was the color of fire. But there was coldness in her eyes that he wasn't used to. It made him take a step back for a moment and fidget behind the door.

She pointed a gloved finger at him. "You."

Wolf let out a gasp and came closer to the door. She talked to him. Didn't she know whom she was addressing? He was the most feared monster out of all the nine kingdoms. Wolf gazed into her eyes. There wasn't a hint of fear in them. He liked it. He smiled, putting on the charms.

"Hello." His voice was warm and inviting.

Yes, this was making of a most interesting relationship.

> <p>The End. Well, you know the restâ€|â€|â€|..<p>

End
file.